



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

HOMELAND SECURITY AGENTS NAB ANOTHER MS-13 GANG MEMBER

MS-13 gang member arrested near Bee County, Texas, during routine traffic stop

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — Department of Homeland Security agents last week arrested another MS 13 gang member here who had illegally entered the United States, an arrest that is part of Operation Community Shield.

Giovanni Bermudez-Arevalo, 26, a citizen of El Salvador, was arrested with 15 other illegal aliens, after Bee County Sheriff's Department deputies conducted a routine traffic stop. The group fled into the brush shortly after the deputies stopped the van they were riding in.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents and Border Patrol agents with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) apprehended Bermudez-Arevalo and noticed numerous tattoos and body markings identifying him as a Mara Salvatrucha-13 or MS-13 gang member. ICE record checks also revealed that Bermudez-Arevalo was convicted on drug charges in October 2002, and was ordered deported by an immigration judge in July 2004.

"ICE is committed to ensuring that criminal aliens don't find refuge in the United States," said Bob Rutt, ICE Houston special agent-in-charge. "We routinely work with all varieties of law enforcement to identify, locate and remove criminal elements from our communities."

Bermudez-Arevalo's arrest is part of Operation Community Shield, an ICE initiative launched in January to target and dismantle violent street gangs across the country. ICE's combined authorities for enforcing immigration and customs laws are powerful tools in fighting the growth of these criminal organizations. ICE has gathered thousands of names of known and suspected gang members from state and local law enforcement, and is comparing those names against immigration databases to determine immigration status and deportability. ICE can also investigate the money laundering, narcotics smuggling, financial crimes and other cross-border crimes typically committed by street gangs.

Since Operation Community Shield began in March, hundreds of different gang members have been arrested nationwide, including more than 200 members of the MS-13 violent street gang. Operation Community Shield is designed to disrupt, dismantle and prosecute violent gang organizations by employing the full range of enforcement authorities and investigative tools available to ICE.

ICE agents confirmed Bermudez-Arevalo had entered the U.S. in 1988 as a permanent resident, but lost his status after his criminal conviction. He admitted entering the U.S. illegally to go visit his mother who still resides in New Jersey.

Bermudez-Arevalo admitted being an MS 13 gang member since joining in Los Angeles in 1995. He said he quit the MS-13 gang after two years of frequent fights with rival gang members.

Bermudez-Arevalo faces federal charges for illegally re-entering the U.S. after being deported. If convicted, he faces up to 20 years in prison.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.